**SPIRITUAL CARE IN ONCOLOGY PATIENTS **

Spirituality is the awareness of a higher power and the beliefs about the meaning of life. Severe illness such as cancer greatly affects one’s spirituality. Spiritual care is providing hope and comfort. It can also help the patient regain hope when feeling helpless, guiding the patients and their families and providing all with the tools to better manage and adjust to the changes throughout the span of the illness and at the end of life. Cancer not only affects the patient but it also affects the patient’s family and caregivers, so it is as important to include them in the care. Spiritual care must be individualized base on the patient’s beliefs, needs and appropriateness.

**ASSESSMENTS**

In order to provide individualized spiritual care various assessment tools are used. They are based on patients’ needs, beliefs, and ability to adapt to illness. Each tool has its own potential value and limitations.

* **Duke Religious Index (DRI)**
* Focuses on religious involvement rather than spirituality
* **Systems of Belief Inventory (SBI-15R)**
* Focuses on 2 factors: belief/experience, and religious social support
* **Brief Measure of Religious Coping (RCOPE)**
* Has 2 dimensions: positive religious coping, and negative religious coping
* Is powerful in predicting poor adjustment to disease
* **Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy – Spiritual Well-being (FACIT-Sp)**
* Has 2 factors: meaning & peace, and faith
* The wordings does not assume a belief in God which then can be comfortably completed by an atheist or agnostic
* **Spiritual Transformation Scale (STS)**
* Has 2 factors: spiritual growth, and spiritual decline
* Specific to change in spirituality since diagnosis
* Limitations: development to date includes mostly observant Christians with little minorities in the sample.
* **Spiritual belief system, Personal Spirituality, Integrity with spiritual community, Ritualized practices & restrictions, Implications for medical cause, Terminal events planning (The SPIRITual History)**
* In-depth interview pertinent to managing serious illness and helps to gain understanding of how patient’s religious beliefs may bear on the patient care decisions.
* **Faith, Importance/Influence, Community and Address (FICA)**
* Focuses on brief spiritual history
* Simple approach, can be use to any patient population

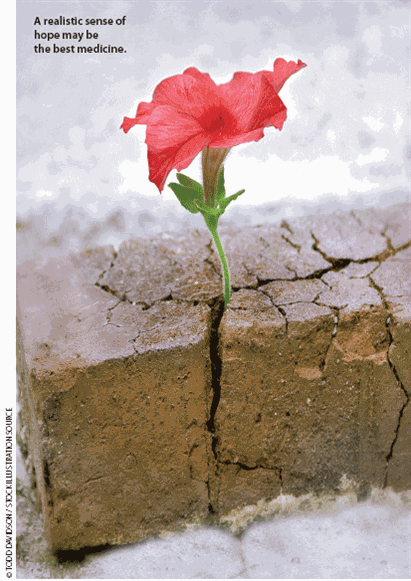
**INTERVENTIONS**

Interventions are provided in different manners by the nurse, physicians, hospital chaplains, spiritual leaders and therapists, support groups, and others, through:

* Therapeutic communication – important tool which allows help explore patient and his/her families’ feelings and beliefs while providing care.
* Sacramental practices
* Utilizing resources such as prayers, music, inspirational readings such as poetry and devotional books
* Refer to hospital chaplains, faith-based therapists, religious leaders
* Providing information and referral to support groups locally and nationwide, also include websites if possible
* Allowing Holy Scriptures and other religion-specific items – rosary beads, devotional pictures, etc.
* Maintaining normalcy, such as visitations from family and friends, hobbies as long as it doesn’t interfere with the patient’s treatment and doesn’t have negative effects on his/her health.
* Allowing as much independence, decision-making regarding one's care as possible and involve family in care.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

* [**www.spiritualityandhealth.ufl.edu**](http://www.spiritualityandhealth.ufl.edu)
* [**www.spiritualityandhealth.duke.edu**](http://www.spiritualityandhealth.duke.edu)
* [**www.gwish.org**](http://www.gwish.org)
* [**www.massgeneral.org/bhi**](http://www.massgeneral.org/bhi)



Spiritual care empowers cancer patients with hope and gives them strength in coping with cancer, the high levels of pain, fatigue and the treatment side effects. It may also decreases stress, anxiety and depression, improves positive point of view, gives sense of belonging and being in control, helps with acceptance of their illness, and the most importantly helps to overcome fear of dying.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F5MbIIPHxQ>

**ARTICLE:**

[**http://www.oncologynurseadvisor.com/integrating-spiritual-care-as-part-of-comprehensive-cancer-treatment/article/192686/**](http://www.oncologynurseadvisor.com/integrating-spiritual-care-as-part-of-comprehensive-cancer-treatment/article/192686/)

**REFERENCES:**

[**http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/spirituality/HealthProfessional/page1**](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/spirituality/HealthProfessional/page1)

[**http://www.cancercenter.com/complementary-alternative-medicine/spiritual-support.cfm**](http://www.cancercenter.com/complementary-alternative-medicine/spiritual-support.cfm)

[**www.webmd.com**](http://www.webmd.com)